



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukrainian Presidential Election

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 20, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ukraine for holding an election on December 26, 2004, that, according to the OSCE International Election Observation Mission, "brought Ukraine substantially closer to meeting OSCE election commitments and Council of Europe and other European standards."

This was an impressive feat, especially in light of widespread fraud and abuse which was documented during the previous two voting rounds.

Credit for this accomplishment goes mostly to the Ukrainian people for demanding – peacefully, but with perseverance – that their government respect their fundamental human right to choose their leaders democratically.

We admire those Ukrainians, including judges, journalists, diplomats and security officials, who took personal and professional risks in order to support a peaceful and democratic outcome of Ukraine's electoral crisis that reflects the will of the Ukrainian people.

We now urge Ukraine to take immediate swift steps to address the shortcomings in election procedures detailed in ODIHR's December 26th election report.

The U.S. Delegation expresses its appreciation to our Ukrainian colleagues for their special effort to keep the Permanent Council informed on developments in Ukraine.

Events there illustrate once again ODIHR's value in helping participating States meet their OSCE commitments.

Participating States need an independent, autonomous institution with the expertise to observe an election and objectively measure it against the commitments participating States have freely undertaken, most notably in the 1990 Copenhagen Document.

The International Election Observation Mission's findings after each round of the Ukrainian election provided crucial, credible information to the Ukrainian public and to the international community.

All participating States should be proud of the OSCE's role during Ukraine's electoral crisis in supporting a democratic outcome in line with our common commitments.

The United States commends, in particular, ODIHR's leadership and elections section for their Herculean effort to organize the OSCE's largest observation effort ever within the space of just a few weeks for the December 26 balloting.

We thank you, Mr. Chairman.